OLD AND NEW JAPAN.

Marvelous Progress Under an Enlightened Regime—Influence of Christianity.

Rev. Dr. William Elliot Griffis in Christian Register: Writers on Japan have told us again and again of the "profound and unbroken" peace of Japan of over two centuries until Commodore Perry's rude intrusions in 1853. During the period between the Pilgrims and the "Mayflower" and Grant and Appomattox it was generally believed that Japan had a kind of Arcadia, a happy valley, a land of peace, whose front knew no wrinkle of war. The thorn-rose of the Pacific lay sound asleep until Prince Perry roused her up with a thunderous smack, and Townsend Harris with a treaty kiss.

In one sense, but a very broad one, this was true; put in reality and in particular it was the exact opposite of truth. Those who from Japanese documents, literature and incontestable proofs, seen by the traveler and student, have acquainted themselves with the inside history of the country, know that it was a time of only measurably suppressed anarchy and lawlessness. It was 250 years of armed truce. It was one large dance to death. Famines were frequent and dreadful. Having no railroads or steamships, and having, in their eagerness to shut out foreigners and keep in their own people, destroyed all seagoing ships, they had no means of water transportation except by means of wretched junks. Millions upon millions died of hunger. To this day, around the cremation-houses of certain inland cities, there are acres of heaps of human bones mixed with ashes, the awful witnesses to the might of famine, when hundreds of bodies were burned daily to prevent pestilence. Beggary in many parts of the country was shamefully common. Child murder and exposure was in some provinces so common that the question which neighbors would ask of a father, whether he intended to raise the new-born baby or not was as proper as it was common. It is estimated by medical men that 50 per cent. of the people died of small-pox. Syphillis was almost a national disease. Brawls, turbulences and riots were very far from being surprising events. Licensed prostitution was a direct factor tending against the increase of population, while abortion was a fine art. No wonder that in 100 years the whole empire of Japan made less than 1,000,000 increase in population. Disease, immorality only partially suppressed, anarchy, famine, social, and economical heterodoxy, cramped Japan as in bands of iron. Religion was fearfully corrupt—even such religion as Buddhism could furnish to the common people and materialistic philosophy could only suggest to the learned.

Now, on the contrary, behold the amazing transformation! In five years the population of Japan increases as in a former century. The statistics of the census taken each year since 1872 show this most incredible fact beyond a peradventure. In wealth the increase has been many fold. Instead of being, until 1868, a great mass of feudalism, an agglomeration, but not a conglomeration, of petty principalities, Japan is now rich, strong, united and overflowing with population. The nation has new ideas, ideals, outlook, and a spirit that demands advance all along the line of material enterprise—yes, and, we are glad to say, even along the avenues of moral and spiritual progress.

Let us detail some of the work done in progressive Japan in the matter of public health and the salvation of physical life. The advance has been wonderful. The average Japanese man today is a healthier, stronger man; and, though the gain be but the fraction of a millimeter, he is a taller man. Smallpox has been almost entirely stamped out, and the pitted face, so very common a few years ago, is now rare except among old men and women. The awfully contageous disease, from which innocent women and children suffered, have been brought to bay, and at least isolated. Infanticide, though, alas! not unknown, is now probably no greater than in western countries. Swift railroads and steamships have banished famine. Hospitals, once unknown, now dot the land by hundreds. Orphan asylums, of old only a far-away curiosity of the west, are hopefully numerous. The old economic and social heresies and laws against nature have given way before orthodoxy and realizable truths. Although even yet the Japanese are far from imitating the holy ambition of so many christians to found charities which are so multifarious and beneficient in christian lands, yet it is a glorious fact that these things have their beginnings in a hundred ways, and the good things of christendom are being imitated in the Mikado's empire.

Christianity, though not now exhibiting itself according to the analogy of the parable of mustard seed, is, I believe, doing its work according to the analogy of the handful of leaven "hid in three measures of meal." A quarter of a million nominal christians and several tens of thousands of real ones are teaching the nation new moral ideas and are living and acclimating the religion of Jesus. Over 25,000 public schools of all grades, from kindergarten to the imperial university having under it many colleges, are uprooting superstition and broadening the minds of the rising generation. Instead of the old political chaos, instead of the calm of despotism—as of the river underneath the ice coat—there is a strong central government, with universal patriotism, a representative diet and earnest discussion, which means authority "broad-based upon the people's will." In a word, here is within twenty-five years a phenomenon like the one-night opening of the blooming cereus or the sudden outburst of the century plant. Here is an increase of wealth, population and power that seems more wonderful than a fairy tale.

THE LABOR PROBLEM.

Plan of the Conciliation Conference Called by the Civic Federation.

The special committee having in charge the programme for the proposed conference on conciliation and arbitrations to meet in Chicago November 13 and 14, have prepared in part the programme. It is proposed to open the sessions with papers on the history and present condition of arbitration in England and on the continent of Europe, in Australia and New Zealand, and in various parts of America.

This will be followed by papers on the distinction between voluntary and compulsory arbitration; between arbitration and conciliation, and between courts for the adjudication of past contracts and those for the settlement of future ones and similar topics. There will be papers also on the ethics of arbitration and the economics of arbitration, and how far arbitration can be made compulsory without infringing on private rights, and arbitration in interstate and quasi-public business, such as railroads and mines. The Springer bill will be considered under this head. Finally there will be papers upon questions of state jurisdiction and private interests, such as the relation between employer and employed in the building trades in manufacturing and in other occupations on the necessity of mutual organization, as a prerequisite arbitration on the sliding scale and kindred methods, profit sharing, etc.

Some of the ablest leaders of labor and capital, and writers on these subjects, have consented to be present, and many of them will read papers. Among them may be mentioned such men as Archbishop Ireland, Joseph D. Weeks, Pittsburg; Mr. Garland, of the Amalgamated Association of iron and steel workers; Mr. Sargent, of the locomotive firemen; Mr. Sheehan, of the trainmen; Mr. Fox, president of the Iron Molders' Union; Mr. Powderly; N. O. Nelson, a prominent employer; Dr. Gould, of the John Hopkins University; Congressman McGann, and many prominent employers and others whom it is thought best not to name until arrangements have been more definitely made.

Geronimo's fighting days are regarded as over by the officials of the Indian bureau, hence his removal to the west.